

# CITY OF REDMOND ARTS COMMISSION

## MINUTES

April 14, 2005

### Old Redmond Schoolhouse Community Center

*“Voice the views of the community to Mayor and City Council in reference to all cultural endeavors”*

**COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:** Chairperson Roy Leban, Vice Chair Yvette Kirby Waters, Phil Teller, Kay Tarapolsi, Heidi Houghton, Latha Sambamurti, Tom Flynn, John Davis

**ABSENT AND EXCUSED:** Katie Innes; youth advocate Julia Marino

**STAFF PRESENT:** Melna Skillingstead, Arts Administrator; Sandra Bettencourt, Recreation Program Manager; Pam Maybee, Recording Secretary

**GUESTS PRESENT:** **City staff guests:** Danny Hopkins, Parks and Recreation Director; Tom Trueblood, Parks and Recreation Manager; Dorie Lysaght, Arts Administrative Assistant

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## **AGENDA**

***Note: Bold/italic text denotes Staff and Commissioner follow-up resulting from this meeting.***

### **I. CALL TO ORDER**

Chairperson Roy Leban called to order the regular meeting of the Redmond Arts Commission (RAC) at 7:00 p.m. at the Old Redmond Schoolhouse Community Center (ORSCC).

### **II. INTRODUCE NEW COMMISSIONER & ARTS ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT**

- Leban introduced and welcomed the two newest members of the Arts Commission “team”—Commissioner John Davis, and Dorie Lysaght, Arts Administrative Assistant to Melna Skillingstead. Davis gave a brief bio describing his arts involvement in music and drama (plays and films). He brings fund raising experience and management planning skills to the Commission as well.
- Leban also announced the resignation of Katie Innes, whose new job conflicts with her time on the Commission. Innes may possibly assist with the

Redmond Outdoor Sculpture (ROS) program. The City will be advertising for the position in the near future.

- Leban asked Commissioners to think about priorities: to insure they are not doing a program just because it has been done before.

### **III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

The Redmond Arts Commission (RAC) minutes of March 10, 2005 were approved with the following amendments:

- Page 2, III, first bullet, last sentence: Change to read "...had increased owing to extensive marketing."
- Page 5, VI. C., third sentence: Add wording: "...Richard Ruiz for work with the ROS postcard and..."
- Page 5, VII.A.1. bottom paragraph, last line: Correct tense: "...as a basis for detailed discussion."

**Motion for approval of the RAC minutes of March 10, 2005 as amended by:**

Commissioner Tarapolsi

**Second by:** Commissioner Houghton

**Motion carried:** 8-0 unanimous

### **IV. ADDITIONS TO AGENDA**

General RAC Business:

- *FOCUS* ArtQuest – Waters

Visual Arts:

- Andrew Carson Update – Tarapolsi

Performing / Literary Arts:

- Site Specific Performance Network – Sambamurti
- RASP Update – Waters

### **V. ITEMS FROM THE AUDIENCE**

None

## **VI. GENERAL RAC BUSINESS**

### **A. Chair/Vice Chair**

Leban thanked Commissioner Teller for his leadership as Chair during the past term. Waters was welcomed as the new Vice Chair and thanked for volunteering her time in that capacity.

### **B. RAC/Staff Roles Dialogue**

Danny Hopkins, Parks and Recreation Director, and Tom Trueblood, Parks and Recreation Division Manager, were present to discuss RAC and staff roles.

Trueblood gave a background of the Arts Commission's inception, development, and other history. Staff asked for a discussion of a clarification of roles and a better understanding of RAC's mission. Lebanon mentioned the "the burn out" factor that some Commissioners have experienced due to large projects carried by one or two Commissioners. He asked staff to define what the Commission should be doing to be cooperating with City staff. Waters asked staff to define the expectation Parks and Recreation has of the RAC, whether or not the Commission is functioning as it should, and/or, suggest ways to bring it back on track if it has strayed from its designed position.

Trueblood outlined Commissioners' roles:

- Commissioners are representatives of the City of Redmond (not separate from the City): officials appointed by the Mayor and approved by City Council.
- RAC's role is to advise and make recommendations to the Mayor, Council, and staff on issues related to the arts.
- RAC has a greater mission and meaning: they are a group of advocates for public art for the City.
- RAC is different than other Commissions in that they have funding for different projects.
- The Commission has a role in the budget (per capita and % for art): They recommend how these funds should be expended.

Trueblood explained that the current Commission has a tendency to present like a board of directors, when in fact it is not the case. Rather, arts must blend with what staff and the Parks Department is doing. Moreover, resources have tightened City-wide; staff must be strategic about what can be implemented. The operating budget will reflect in relationship with RAC and staff.

Waters perceived that whatever the budget amount has been, RAC recommendations are not those being passed along: A "disconnect" exists between Commissioners' recommendations versus what staffs comes back with. Trueblood agreed and emphasized that when money gets tight, it is important to trust that staff is carrying RAC's recommendations forward. Staff might not

agree with the recommendation, but they would communicate their stance (possibly a recommendation of their own) with the Commission. The recommendation(s) would be given to the managers, the Director, the Mayor, and Council. If a report comes back to RAC as rejected, it is most likely due to limited City resources.

Teller advocated a 3-5 year plan, and asked staff to explain its 3-5 year plan, i.e., its long term vision. Staff outlined the City's three plans:

- A two-year (real dollars), a six-year (priorities), and an "out-year" plan (a "wish list" of seven-plus years and out). These plans all fall in a cycle of the biennium budget.
- Commissioners should think in terms of two-year planning (immediate), 4- to 6-year priority planning, and then the seven-plus year wish list.
- When involved in programming, it is difficult to look at the long term; therefore, the fundamental role of RAC must be considered, i.e., as advocates of the community, what picture should arts in Redmond look like in two years. Staff would work with RAC to develop the picture and make recommendations to the Mayor and Council for action.

Trueblood addressed programming versus RAC raising dollars themselves.

- Programming is staff's responsibility. They are accountable to the Mayor and Council. However, if staff cannot do the program, RAC has said they would, but that causes the burn out.
- RAC is structured for inherent change so new people can come in. The turnover does not accommodate the reality of the current structure; therefore, need to adjust expectations.
- "Sun-setting" a program should not be viewed as "disappointment"; rather, it is a normal business cycle.
- Commissioner turnover means expectations need to be adjusted. The physics dictates the Commission would not be able to accomplish the same things.

Leban asked how unfinished programs could be handed off, i.e., the programs that are burdensome for one person. Waters added that either programs need to be self-sustaining to be handed from Commissioner to Commissioner; or, have a program with a "shelf life." Staff responded:

- Commissioners were not meant to have a lead role for programs; rather, Commissioners were to have a supporting role to staff—it is staff's job. Staff would hold the "success planning piece" in the lead capacity, regardless whether or not a Commissioner left.
- RAC needs to do the programs that it should be doing in the way it was meant to function, i.e., in its bearing capacity in an agreed reality—then from there, set expectations.
- Emphasize keeping the trust level high between staff and Commissioners, especially as resources get tighter.

Houghton saw the RAC handbook as a defining role instrument; she offered the following for discussion:

- RAC needs to discuss values and mission before it can have a strategic plan (3-5 year), while evaluating the program plan.
- Once values, mission, and vision are established, these do not often change.
- RAC has not gone through the discussion in order to evaluate the mission, because they are spending too much time on programs.

Hopkins challenged Commissioners to write a timeline to get the values, mission, and vision established over a 6-month time period (to set a timeframe). Houghton believed it could only be done with a two-meeting system per month. Tarapolsi concurred to concentrate on the value/mission in the first meeting; then programs and volunteer workers in the second meeting.

Trueblood gave further clarification:

- Must not confuse a nonprofit organization with a government entity.
- RAC is part of a larger entity; if RAC develops a non-profit role, it would enter into a political arena.
- Commissioners should familiarize themselves with the City's mission and staff's values; it is a template for strategies, vision, etc.
- Currently, the Commission sees themselves as a non-profit organization with a board of directors, and also sometimes, as an advisory to the City; however, RAC was not set up to do programming. Staff wants to help Commissioners to be the most productive in their role.

Commissioner and staff conclusions:

- Commissioner Flynn:
  - Supports the advisory board role, having a 3-5 year plan.
  - Do less programming; rather, fulfill an executive, advisory, planning role, offering a strategic level of thinking.
  - Recognize RAC is a part of the City (not a non-profit); discover how to bring skills strategically to that executive level thinking (e.g., RAC could write grants to bring in money to bring more arts in to the community).
- Bettencourt: need to free the Commission from the "worker-bee" mentality.
- Trueblood:
  - Arts can be enhanced via fund raising (with effective communication with others in the City).
  - Communication and trust must be within the system in which it must work.
- Commissioner Teller: Commission has evolved and needs to be acknowledged as part of the Commissioner's growth.

- Commissioner Davis: Agreed that values and missions equal vision which equals strategic plan. He favored the six-month challenge as suggested by Hopkins.

### **C. Tabled Motion: Second RAC Monthly Working Meeting**

Skillingstead clarified that attendance of a second meeting could not be mandatory.

Trueblood and Hopkins had these suggestions:

- The first meeting could be the mission meeting; programs would take time to get through.
- All Commissioners may not need to be at every second meeting; outcome could be shared with others.
- RAC could start out with an ad hoc committee instead; then, evolve to all after the purpose and issue had been accomplished.

*Hopkins volunteered to assist the Commission by forwarding the following to them:*

- Values of staff
- The City's/Department's mission statement
- Comp Plan mission statement
- Comp Plan Arts Chapter
- PRO Plan Art chapter

Hopkins urged Commissioners to familiarize themselves with the PRO Plan and the art element of the Comp Plan.

Sambamurti reported on her analysis of holding a second meeting via research with other cities. She distributed a handout of her comments and research results, and asked Commissioners to discuss the pros and cons. Commissioners took time to review the document/points.

Discussion:

- RAC cannot rely on Commissioners doing the work that staff should be doing; and, a program cannot be built that would eventually cease due to a Commissioner leaving. (Leban)
- The second meeting focus has changed now; must look at line items, i.e., every program, to see if it could be supported with current resources. (Waters)
- The first meeting would focus on programs in general (not specifics), i.e., more executive issues and recommendations. The second meeting would discuss details of committees. (Leban)
- Support of the 6-month pilot second meeting to specifically address this—but no longer than six months. The second meeting would eliminate the need to have committees. (Davis)

- Without committees, however, it could create a dynamic of adding “more chefs in the kitchen.” (Davis and Sambamurti)
- Could try the second meeting to see if issues could be worked through. (Tarapolsi)
- The second meeting would create a greater transparency between Commissioners to know what everyone is doing. (Waters)
- A second meeting is not necessary since Commissioners are informed via access to committee minutes now. Not all Commissioners are interested in the procedures and participation of all the committees. (Sambamurti)
- Discuss and ascertain the reason for the programs, and consider if they should or could be done differently. Work through the programs, not just “dump them.” (Leban)
- Instead of a second meeting, rather, institute an ad hoc committee to support and figure out how/if a second meeting would work. (Flynn)

**Motion for approval to move discussion to the remaining agenda items to complete the meeting and table this discussion by:** Commissioner Teller

**Second by:** Commissioner Flynn

**Discussion:** Leban commented that this was the current agenda item that Commissioners would be going back to in a discussion, noting he did not see the point in the motion. All would be interested in ending the meeting quickly.

**Motion carried:** 6 yay, 1 nay (Leban), 1 abstain (Waters)

Davis noted it was not necessary to approve the second meeting now; rather, learn to see pros and cons as it progresses in discussions.

**Motion for approval to form an ad hoc committee made up of Houghton, Sambamurti, Davis, and Skillingstead to research the “why” and “how” of RAC’s strategic plan, having these committee members take their own minutes, and report to the general RAC what the process could be by presenting one or more proposals (e.g., how many months, a second meeting, a committee, etc.):** Commissioner Houghton

**Second by:** Commissioner Leban

**Motion carried:** 7 yay, 1 nay (Teller)

**Motion for approval to table the motion of having a second RAC meeting by:** Commissioner Tarapolsi

**Second by:** Commissioner Waters

**Motion carried:** 8-0 unanimous

#### **D. Annual Report Status**

Leban reported he is missing/needling text from Commissioners for the 2004 Annual Report. *He will send out an email reminder to Commissioners as to what text is missing.*

## **E. Staff Reports**

### **1. Budget Update (handout)**

Skillingstead reported the following has been added to the budget spreadsheet:

- Microsoft and 4Culture (Sustain Support Grant) funding
- Additional columns and formatting
- Legend of different funders

Waters complimented staff on the spreadsheet improvements.

## **F. FOCUS Update**

Waters reported she would need short *FOCUS* articles as soon as possible regarding these:

- Arts in the Parks schedule and pictures (*Skillingstead will provide*)
- Redmond Arts Day article
- Historical Society Art Contest Exhibit (*Tarapolsi will provide*)
- Sculpture garden update (if there is one)
- New City Hall art and garage façade art article (*Skillingstead will extract information from 4Culture's letter*)

## **VII. PERFORMING ARTS/LITERARY ARTS**

### **A. Project Status**

#### **1. Microsoft Sponsorship**

Sambamurti announced that RAC received \$10,000 from Microsoft for Arts in the Parks programming. Two thousand dollars will go for staffing expenses at Microsoft; \$8,000 will go to the performing arts budget. Four performances are scheduled at Microsoft. *Sambamurti and Chair Leban will sign a thank you note to Microsoft for their sponsorship.*

Skillingstead noted the City's graphic designer will include pictures of all the venues for Arts in the Parks in the brochure, which is being readied.

#### **2. Eastside Symphony Co-Sponsorship**

Skillingstead reported the last several years RAC has co-sponsored the Eastside Symphony via the use of the Senior Center. They are requesting use of the Center only once this year.

**Motion for approval of the co-sponsorship of Eastside Symphony through the use of the Senior Center as requested by:** Commissioner Tarapolsi

**Second by:** Commissioner Teller

**Motion carried:** 8-0 unanimous



### 3. Site Specific Performance

Sambamurti reported the results of Commissioner voting last month, selecting three groups in their order of preference:

1. Meghan Murphy (dancer) (Redmond Town Center venue)
2. One Lump or Two Productions (four to five skits at coffee houses—a culminating event)
3. *theater simple* (Anderson Park venue to do multiple skits)

Sambamurti and Skillingstead have met with the artists who have reviewed and recommended their performing venues of choice. Sambamurti will present RAC's preferences to Charlie Rathbun (4Culture). Rathbun will negotiate with the artists to do two or three (or no) shows.

Leban believed that Anderson Park was a wrong venue choice because it is more a place for parents with kids; also, little parking is available. Rather, he suggested Luke McRedmond or Idylwood Parks would have more traffic. Skillingstead differed in that Arts in the Parks has used Anderson Park successfully in the past.

Teller noted the meeting had gone 34 minutes over schedule. He recommended adopting a policy to stay within the scheduled two-hour time limit and agenda.

### 4. RASP Update

Waters reported that RASP's *Write Out Loud! 2005* event was coming up soon. RASP has requested judges for the Teen Poetry Slam on May 4 at the Old Fire House. Interested Commissioners may contact Laura Lee Bennett.

## VIII. VISUAL ARTS

### A. Project Status

#### 1. ROS Update

Skillingstead reported that a curator had been hired. Staff will meet with the curator next week. The curator will bring artist slides for review.

Bettencourt recommended having ROS be staff-directed and bring the artist selection to the full RAC for a vote, then evaluate how it should be handled.

**Motion for approval to have the curator bring to the full Commission the artists' samples for the number of spots available (with an additional one or two) by:** Commissioner Tarapolsi

**Second by:** Commissioner Waters

**Motion carried:** 8-0 unanimous

Tarapolsi reported that the tourism grant was due on April 29. Skillingstead explained that ROS would not be applying for it, due to a funding mechanism within the Tourism Funding program that provides for arts programs. However, funding applications can be submitted for additional tourism related program proposals.

**2. Andrew Carson Update**

Tarapolsi reported that Andrew Carson viewed the space location at Idylwood Park and did not approve of the site for his artwork. Alternate locations may need to be considered.

**3. Grass Lawn Park Art Dedication**

Commissioners Leban and/or Waters will attend the City Council meeting on April 19 to invite Council members to the art dedication at Grass Lawn Park.

**IX. ARTS EDUCATION/GRANTS**

**A. Youth Advocate Report**

None (Marino was absent from this meeting)

**X. GENERAL NEW BUSINESS**

**A. Handbook Update**

Deferred.

**B. New Commissioner Opening**

Commissioners were asked to send their nominations, suggestions, comments, background, etc., for a new Commissioner to Skillingstead and Leban. Skillingstead will work on advertising with the City's community affairs person.

**XI. MOTION TO ADJOURN**

**Motion to adjourn by:** Commissioner Waters

**Second by:** Commissioner Tarapolsi

**Discussion:** Teller noted the meeting had gone 40 minutes past the time limit. He requested that future meetings stay within the two-hour time limit, and that there would be an awareness of the timeline.

**Motion carried:** 8-0 unanimous

The meeting adjourned at 9:40 p.m.

Minutes prepared by Recording Secretary, Pam Maybee

**NEXT REDMOND ARTS COMMISSION MEETING:**  
**May 12, 2005**  
**Old Redmond School House Community Center**  
**7:00 p.m.**